

## CLAIMS

### What is claimed is:

5 1. A computer-implemented substitute fulfillment system that identifies and secures substitute workers for a plurality of different organizations, comprising:

a central server that processes information associated with a plurality of different organizations;

10 a central database coupled to the central server, the central database including records that store substitute fulfillment data associated with each of the plurality of different organizations, wherein for each of the different organizations the fulfillment data includes worker records representing workers that may be absent from the organization and substitute worker records  
15 representing substitute workers that may be used to fill a position of an absent worker;

20 a plurality of local processors that are remote from the central server, each of the local processors being associated with one of the different organizations and having a separate local database coupled thereto, wherein each local database is associated with one of the different organizations and includes worker records representing workers that may be absent from the organization and substitute worker records representing  
25 substitute workers that may be used to fill a position of an absent worker;

wherein the central database maintains each of the records on each local database in parallel with a

corresponding record on the central database by periodically updating the records on the local databases in response to data changes on the central database, and wherein each local database maintains records on the central database in parallel with corresponding records on the local database by periodically updating the records on the central databases in response to data changes on the local database;

at least one telephone communication link coupled to the central server, wherein the telephone communication link provides information representing absent workers to the central server, the central server identifies one or more of the substitute workers in response to the information representing absent workers, and the central server communicates information representing positions to be filled to substitute workers via the telephone communication link or an internet communication link; and

wherein the central server periodically transmits reports that include absentee and substitute information to each of the different organizations via the telephone communication link or the Internet communication link.

2. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein each worker record includes worker identification, contact, position, qualification, and substitute selection information.

3. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 2, wherein said each worker record further includes entitlement information and historical information of absences and substitute fulfillment events.

4. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein each substitute worker record includes substitute worker identification, contact, qualification and availability information.

5. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein said organizations are unaffiliated.

6. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein said ~~telephone~~ communication link includes a plurality of phone lines that may be accessed simultaneously by a plurality of organizations and workers.

7. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein the Internet communication link further comprises a web site interface.

8. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein said telephone communication link further comprises means for sending facsimile transmissions from the central server to an organization.

9. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, further comprising interactive voice response technology, coupled to the ~~telephone~~ communication link.

10. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, further comprising an automated telephone attendant accessible through said ~~telephone~~ communication link.

11. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 1, wherein said <sup>central</sup> database further comprises a plurality of

organization master records including identification, billing and contact information.

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12. The substitute fulfillment system of claim 7, wherein said web site interface includes a link to a downloadable substitute fulfillment data entry and electronic communications computer application.

13. A method of performing substitute fulfillment by finding substitutes for absentee workers in an organization, comprising the steps of:

10 providing an automated substitute fulfillment system remote from said organization;

initializing said substitute fulfillment system by creating a main database of stored substitute fulfillment data records;

15 notifying said substitute fulfillment system of a worker absence;

automatically identifying potential substitute workers using said substitute fulfillment system;

20 automatically contacting potential substitute workers serially and relaying a replacement request until one potential substitute agrees to cover said absence or until said list is exhausted;

notifying personnel in said organization of the results.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of initializing said main database further includes the steps of:

5 providing worker data records for a plurality of workers, including information for assigning substitute workers for said workers; and

10 providing substitute worker data records for a plurality of substitute workers, including information for assigning said substitute workers to replace absent workers.

15 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of initializing said main database further includes the steps of entering substitute fulfillment system data into a computer at said organization and digitally transmitting said data to said substitute fulfillment system.

16. The method of claim 13, further including the step of registering with said substitute fulfillment system.

20 17. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of registering with said substitute fulfillment system is conducted electronically through the Internet.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of registering with said substitute fulfillment system is conducted through a web site interface.

25 19. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of notifying said substitute fulfillment system of an absence is conducted telephonically.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of notifying said substitute fulfillment system of an absence is conducted through a web site interface.

5 21. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of notifying said substitute fulfillment system of an absence further includes the steps of first informing said organization of said absence and then digitally transmitting absence information to said substitute fulfillment system.

10 22. The method of claim 14, wherein said step of identifying substitutes includes the steps of retrieving a worker data record for said absent worker, and extracting criteria for identifying a potential substitute worker.

15 23. The method of claim 14, wherein said step of identifying substitutes includes the steps of retrieving a worker data record for said absent worker, and extracting a list of potential substitute workers.

20 24. The method of claim 22, wherein said step of identifying substitutes further includes the steps of using said criteria to create a list of potential workers by searching substitute workers' data records for substitute workers meeting said criteria.

25 25. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of sending electronic mail to notify personnel of said organization of an absence after said substitute fulfillment system has been notified of an absence.

26. The method of claim 13, further including the step of providing said substitute worker with instructions regarding replacing said absent worker.

5 27. The method of claim 13, further including the step of forwarding messages from said absent worker to said substitute worker.

28. The method of claim 13, wherein said step of notifying personnel of the result is conducted by facsimile.

10 29. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of maintaining entitlement balances for workers.

30. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of maintaining local databases at said organizations.

15 31. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of building a substitute fulfillment history by updating said main database.

32. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of aggregating historical substitute fulfillment data for an organization.

20 33. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of aggregating historical substitute fulfillment data for multiple organizations.

34. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of analyzing historical substitute fulfillment data.

35. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of reporting on trends in historical substitute fulfillment data.

5 36. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of providing a list of available substitute positions.

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